

A War over Words: Changing Descriptions of Nanjing in Japanese History Textbooks

Takashi Yoshida

I. Introduction

In April 2001, the Japanese government approved the controversial junior high school textbook *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho* (*New History Textbook*). In publishing the book, the authors issued a challenge to the existing seven textbooks published by Tokyo shoseki, Osaka shuppan, Shimizu shoin, Kyōiku shuppan, Nihon bunkyō shuppan, Teikoku shoin, and Nihon shoseki. In the eyes of the authors of *New History Textbook*, the texts that they hoped to replace were masochistic and anti-Japanese.¹⁾ In their introduction, the authors of *New History Textbook* urged readers not to consider history as a simplistic story of good or evil and cautioned against judging any historical events according to prevailing present-day moral standards.²⁾ Unlike other existing textbooks, *New History Textbook* was made widely available in the commercial market. Nishio Kanji, one of the authors of the text, argued in the preface of the commercial edition that he felt obliged to make the work accessible to the public. Because his textbook had been publicly attacked both inside and outside Japan, he deemed it imperative that Japanese readers be allowed to judge for themselves the content of the text. Nishio believed that criticisms of the text were unfounded and that the readers would find the book not only persuasive but inspiring.³⁾

Nishio was certainly correct about one thing: critics in Japan and abroad had harshly criticized *New History Textbook* and had denounced its approval by the Japanese government. Historians and educators in Japan published a number of books that pointed out errors and deceptive interpretations in the textbook.⁴⁾ Both the Chinese and the South Korean governments formally protested the Japanese government's approval of the volume.⁵⁾ In South Korea, hundreds of angry protesters demanded that the textbook be recalled.⁶⁾ Seemingly, many protesters regarded the Japanese approval of the textbook as an attempt to whitewash the country's wartime atrocities.

Although many foreign newspapers reported that most junior high schools rejected the controversial *New History Textbook*, they failed to position the dispute in a broader framework. Caught up in the excitement of the moment, they neglected to observe that the debate over how to teach the history of the Asia-Pacific War has divided Japanese opinion for generations. Why have controversies over history textbooks erupted continually in postwar Japan? What drove the *New History Textbook* authors to publish their own junior high school history textbook? Was the Japanese approval of the text was a deviation in government policy as compared to previous years? Should we be alarmed by the textbook? If Japan is to achieve reconciliation with the nations and peoples it

victimized during the Asia-Pacific War, such questions must be candidly addressed.

In this essay, I will first describe the historiography of history textbooks from the wartime period to the present. I will then discuss *New History Textbook*, its politics, and its impact on the other existing textbooks. Finally, I shall identify some ways in which the textbook controversy in the late 1990s has affected the broader historic consciousness in East Asia.

II. History Textbooks and Pedagogues in Japan

i) History Textbooks during the Asia-Pacific War (1931–45)

During the war, school textbooks during years of compulsory education played a central role in promoting nationalism and patriotism in the nation. In geography, for example, students learned that Japan was consisted of the Japanese islands and the Korean peninsula. The Japanese islands in the textbook were defined as Honshū, Hokkaido, Shikoku, Kyūshū, the Ryūkyū islands, Taiwan, the Kurils, and South Sakhalin.⁷⁾ Japanese reading primers used by first-year students included such stories as “Forward, Forward, Soldiers Forward” (*susume susume heitai susume*) and “The Flag of the Rising Sun, *Banzai, Banzai*” (*hinomaru no hata banzai banzai*).⁸⁾ The second-year text also included such readings as “Elder Brother in the Navy” (*Kaigun no nisan*) and “Enlistment of My Elder Brother” (*Nisan no nyūei*), stories calculated to indoctrinate students with a romantic view of the military.⁹⁾ Ethics texts often emphasized loyalty to the emperor and lauded those who sacrificed themselves for the nation.¹⁰⁾ A math textbook used an illustration of fighters and bombers to teach the concept of greater than and less than.¹¹⁾

Wartime textbooks constantly exposed students to the war, and history textbooks were no exception. For example, the sixth-year history textbook described the war between Nationalist China and Imperial Japan that began in 1937 as follows:

After the Manchurian Incident was settled, our country concluded a cease-fire agreement with China. Moreover, [our country] pursued the establishment of eternal peace in the East based on the cooperation of Japan, Manchukuo, and China. However, the Chinese government, assisted both by European countries and the United States, did not understand our sincerity and persistently tried to exclude our country. Furthermore, [it] also dispatched troops [to the north] and tried to disrupt the development of Manchukuo. In July 1937, at the Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing, Chinese troops fired on our army, which was conducting maneuvers. In addition, some even assaulted our citizens. Therefore, in the interest of justice, our country decided to send the military to rectify China’s mistaken ideas and to establish eternal peace in the East. Since then our military, both navy and army, has accomplished significant achievements. The people on the home front have sincerely been giving solid support to this campaign and are rushing forward in order to carry out this great mission. The foundation for eternal peace in Asia is gradually being laid.¹²⁾

The text blamed Nationalist China for disrupting the peace in East Asia and for forcing Japan to stand up against it to protect Japanese citizens from Chinese atrocities. In contrast, the history textbook completely ignored Japanese atrocities in China and

devastations among the people caused by the Japanese military. The text provided a crystal clear view of good and evil, and Imperial Japan was always portrayed as just and benevolent.

Certainly, some educators did not support the state's war efforts, but many of these pedagogues had paid a price for their dissent by the late 1930s. In the early 1930s, the government arrested more than two hundred elementary and middle school teachers because of their alleged allegiance to the Communist Party.¹³⁾ Under the Peace Preservation Law of 1925, the government was empowered to arrest disturbers of the peace, and the crime was legally punishable by death. Throughout the wartime years, the Special Higher Police monitored “unpatriotic Japanese” and occasionally arrested them. After the war started between Japan and China, the government further tightened thought control and censorship, and public criticism of the government's war efforts could lead to imprisonment.¹⁴⁾ Under such circumstance, it was particularly difficult, if not impossible, to openly confront the government's wartime educational policies and curricula.

ii) During the US Occupation Period

The American occupation began following the Allied victory in August 1945. Within one month after Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), arrived in Japan, the Occupation ordered the Japanese government to delete or revise portions of textbooks on every subject.¹⁵⁾ The SCAP understood that the wartime textbooks had contributed to militarism, and a new history textbook, prepared under the SCAP supervision, soon appeared. In September 1946, *Kuni no ayumi* (The Course of the Nation), a two-volume national history textbook for elementary schools, was published.¹⁶⁾ The new textbook reflected both the domestic and international politics of the period. Regarding the full-scale war between Japan and China, the text stated:

Six years after the Manchurian Incident, the China Incident occurred. In July 1937, at the Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing, a fight between Japanese and Chinese forces suddenly began. Our army immediately advanced its forces and occupied Beijing. Then, [the army] took Qingdao and Shanghai as well as ravaging Nanjing. [The Japanese forces] occupied such important places as Guangdong, Wuchang, and Hankou. ... Although the government made every effort to end the incident and to maintain friendly relations with China, the military rapidly enlarged the fighting. Like a stone gathering momentum as it rolls down a slope, the incident got out of hand.¹⁷⁾

The text no longer portrayed Japan as an innocent. The SCAP narrative carefully avoided any indictment of either the Japanese people or their government. It emphasized instead that the military had dragged Japan into the unwanted war. In addition, although it did not go into details, the new text touched on Japanese atrocities in Nanjing.

Whereas wartime history textbooks in Japan had propagated nationalism and patriotism, *The Course of the Nation* set forth an alternative political message and exhorted students to participate in building a new, democratic Japan. The purposes of the text are close to the surface in the following excerpt:

Under General MacArthur, the Allied Powers occupied Japan. This occupation was aimed at establishing public order in Japan, destroying the military, completely overthrowing militarist ideologies, giving freedom to the people, and rebuilding Japan into a democracy. ... The government and the people have been working together to build a peaceful Japan in order to carry out the goal set by SCAP. ... A new politics has begun. Now, truly, the people must combine their efforts in order to make Japan a democratic nation.¹⁸⁾

Because the SCAP soon restructured the school curriculum and blended history into the more comprehensive discipline of social studies, *The Course of a Nation* was used for less than a year.

In its own fashion, *The Course of a Nation* was no less pieces of propaganda than its wartime predecessors. In any event, its basic anti-militarist, anti-imperialist position set the tone for history texts for years to come, even as the Cold War abetted the resurrection of conservative values in Japanese politics.

iii) Fighting Communism, Battling Guilt: The Cold War Years

Starting in the mid-1950s, the government explored using the authorization system, originally begun during the Occupation, to suppress descriptions that it regarded as harmful to the nation. For example, the government denied approval to eight social studies textbooks that were intended to be used in junior high and high schools in 1957 because it regarded them as politically biased. These textbooks wholeheartedly endorsed the new postwar Constitution, challenged legitimacy of the mutual security agreement between Japan and the United States, emphasized wartime destructions and atrocities, and promoted anti-war sentiments. According to the conservative government, none of these positions was consonant with the best interests of the state.¹⁹⁾

Some historians gave up writing textbooks. Others such as Ienaga Saburō chose to fight against the authorities. In the 1950s and 1960s, anti-war sentiment was especially strong among teachers who now regretted having urged a previous generation into battle. Essentially, these teachers felt that, by cooperating with the government during the war, they had murdered their own students.

Ienaga Saburō was a history professor at Tokyo University of Education who had been at work on a textbook since the early 1950s. In 1965, Ienaga finally brought a case against the government and sought for a remedy at law. The authorities had found Ienaga's textbook far from acceptable and had demanded more than 320 changes. These demands included the deletion of such terms as "reckless" (*mubō*) that had been used to characterize the Asia-Pacific War.²⁰⁾ Before that case was adjudicated, Ienaga filed another lawsuit in 1967, narrowing his legal objectives strategically to improve his chances of winning the case. In 1970, the Tokyo District Court ruled in favor of Ienaga in his second lawsuit and ordered the government to nullify its rejection of the Ienaga textbook. Although the government immediately appealed, the judgment was perceived as a significant victory and inspired Ienaga and his supporters to continue challenging the state's power over textbooks.²¹⁾

By the late 1970s, inspired by favorable court decisions and spurred by zealous activism, history textbooks began to include more descriptions of Japanese wartime

atrocities than in previous years. For example, junior high school history textbooks published by Nihon shoseki and Kyōiku shuppan in 1975 and high school history textbooks published by Jiyū shobō in 1974, by Teikoku shoin in 1977, by Jikkyō shuppan in 1977, and by Sanseidō in 1978 all discussed Japanese atrocities in Nanjing, although the depth of inquiry varied.²²⁾

By the 1970s, a number of pedagogues had begun to advocate a more self-critical approach to teaching the Asia-Pacific War. They argued the importance of focusing on the war's devastation and the sufferings of the peoples in Asia. For example, in 1973, Oda Baku, a high school teacher, urged in *Rekishi chiri kyōiku* (Education in History and Geography), a monthly education journal, that Japanese history teachers must understand that the nation had been a perpetrator during the war. Oda argued that teachers must recognize the fact that Imperial Japan was an aggressor and should teach their students that Japanese have a mission to redeem the nation from its past crimes. He advocated that teachers lead their students to consider why Japan chose the way it did and to ask who was responsible for wartime atrocities.²³⁾ High school teachers such as Yoneda Shinji used Honda Katsuichi's *Chūgoku no tabi* (Travels in China), a book that vividly described Japanese wartime atrocities in China, so that his students would learn the war from the viewpoint of a perpetrator rather than that of a victim. Yoneda also assigned his students to interview veterans who had experienced the war in China.²⁴⁾ Nevertheless, in the 1970s, those teachers who felt it necessary to teach the war as an episode of unwarranted aggression were still relatively few in number. It was the 1982 controversy over history textbooks that popularized this approach among liberal history teachers and prompted a large-scale re-evaluation of teaching perspectives.

iv) “Our Nation Shall Sincerely Listen ...”: The Controversy Intensifies in the 1980s

Along with Ienaga and his supporters, many politicians became actively concerned with history textbooks. Following the 1980 elections, in which the conservative ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party, secured a majority in the lower and upper houses, the government again began to tighten its approval standards regarding school textbooks.²⁵⁾ In June 1982, the *Asahi* newspaper ran a sensational front page article asserting that the government was attempting to return history textbooks to the nationalist agenda they had espoused before 1945.²⁶⁾ Although the article was not entirely true, the news provoked protests around the world. The debate over Japanese wartime and prewar history was now international.

In addition, the textbook controversy outraged concerned individuals within Japanese society and provoked them to reconsider Japan's wartime past. Progressive historians examined the legacy of war from the viewpoint of the victims. One after another, books on Japanese wartime atrocities in Asia became available at bookstores from the early 1980s on. These critiques included studies of the Nanjing Massacre, wartime slave labor, ethnic minorities in the Japanese military, and chemical and biological warfare. The new climate of discussion was also apparent in freshly issued textbooks. Textbook authors now had greater freedom to use such terms as “invasion” (*shinryaku*) to characterize Japanese military campaigns. Descriptions of the Nanjing Massacre in textbooks, too, began to speak more vividly of the sufferings of the residents in Nanjing. For example, the junior high school history textbook published by Tokyo shoseki explained the

atrocities in the following footnote:

Within a few weeks after the occupation of Nanjing the Japanese military killed many Chinese in and around the city. It is said that 70,000–80,000 residents alone were killed, including women and children. If surrendered soldiers are included, it is said that more than 200,000 Chinese were killed. By contrast, China claims that the number of victims, including those killed in combat, exceeded 300,000. This incident was known as the Nanjing Massacre, and foreign countries blamed Japan for it. Nonetheless, the ordinary people in Japan were not informed of the facts.²⁷⁾

In contrast, conservative critics and writers published volumes that resolutely maintained Japanese innocence. In their eyes, foreign governments had no right to intervene in Japanese domestic affairs, and the rhetoric of the new textbooks was a sign of moral decadence and patriotic decline. Some of the diehard conservatives, adopting the same tactics as Ienaga Saburō, sued the government in March 1984 for unfairly exaggerating the cruelty of the Japanese military in Nanjing.²⁸⁾ Moreover, in 1986, outraged conservatives also published *Shinpen Nihonshi* (New Edition of Japanese History), a high school history textbook, and the government approved it after the authors made revisions according to the governmental standard. Many liberal history teachers regarded the text as alarming and worked to dissuade high schools from ordering it.²⁹⁾ For example, the Fukuoka branch of the Association for History Educators (Rekishi Kyōikusha Kyōgikai) published a special brochure entitled “*Shinpen Nihonshi o kiru*” (An Analysis of *New Edition of Japanese History*) in October 1986. The Fukuoka branch also published newsletters that denounced the conservative content of the textbook in order to raise public awareness and discourage high-school history teachers from using it.³⁰⁾

Both at home and abroad, opposition to conservative control of Japanese history curricula was encountering stiff resistance. Little wonder, then, that liberal history teachers seized the moment and urged their colleagues to join them in exploring Imperial Japan’s role as a perpetrator of wartime injustice. For example, Dai Guohui, a Taiwanese-born professor of Chinese history at Rikkyō University, stressed that ordinary Japanese must acquire knowledge of all aspects of Japan’s modernization, including its expansionism and its colonialism.³¹⁾ The Association for History Educators enjoined its members to “research the war from a local point of view” and examine such topics as local cooperation or resistance to the national war effort and slave laborers and their lives in military facilities.³²⁾

v) Textbooks and History Pedagogues in the Post-Shōwa Period

In the 1990s, progressive history textbook authors continued to enjoy a favorable wind. The end of the Cold War and the death of the Shōwa Emperor, or Hirohito, in 1989 made it easier than ever to write detailed descriptions of wartime Japanese atrocities and lesser offenses inflicted on Chinese, Koreans, Okinawans, and others. By the late 1990s, junior high school history textbooks in particular had entered an unprecedented era of openness. Although in-depth analysis was rarely included in these textbooks, they now treated at least in passing such topics as the atrocities in Nanjing, the

independence movement in colonial Korea, women forced into sexual slavery, and slave labor conditions imposed upon ethnic minorities in the Japanese empire. What had once been relegated to footnotes or excluded entirely was now much more prominent. For instance, the main text of the Tokyo shoseki junior high school textbook now explained the Nanjing Massacre in these terms:

On July 7, 1937, without a declaration of war, the Japan-China War began after an armed clash between the Japanese and the Chinese troops at the Marco Polo Bridge in a suburb of Beijing. The war expanded from North China to Central China. By the end of 1937, the Japanese military occupied the capital, Nanjing. At this time, the Japanese military is said to have killed as many as 200,000 Chinese, including women and children.³³⁾

Of the seven approved history textbooks, six now included estimates of the death count at Nanjing, which ranged from 100,000 to 200,000. Four of them even referred to the Chinese official estimate of 300,000 deaths.³⁴⁾

In the eyes of conservatives, the flourishing of such progressive textbooks and other history publications seemed to be a public display of “masochism.” They saw these texts as a flood of “anti-Japanese” and “leftist propaganda.”³⁵⁾ In 1996, Nishio Kanji, a professor of German literature at the University of Electro-Communications, Fujioka Nobukatsu, a professor of education at the University of Tokyo, and their supporters founded the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (*Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai*). They argued that the existing junior high school history textbooks were full of evil motivations and violated the education rights of Japanese citizens. They urged the public to examine the approved junior high school history textbooks and to realize how destructive these texts were to the patriotic fiber of the country.³⁶⁾

In particular, Nishio and Fujioka argued that the Nanjing Massacre—as that phrase was commonly understood—and the scandal of military sex slavery had never happened. As to Nanjing, the two scholars’ argument was fundamentally one of semantics. While conceding that a relatively trifling number of lives might have been taken unjustly, they dismissed the six-figure estimates as willful and irresponsible exaggerations. If the “Nanjing Massacre” was defined as a slaughter of more than 100,000 lives, then, they contended, no such event had ever occurred.³⁷⁾ They further alleged that the so-called comfort women (*ianfu*) were prostitutes instead of sex slaves, and the entire story concerning sex slavery was a calculated conspiracy by Japanese leftists who had been rendered desperate by the outcome of the Cold War. Embittered by the collapse of Marxist-Leninism, they were now trying to comfort themselves by throwing stones at Japan’s imperial past.³⁸⁾ The fury that Nishio and Fujioka felt toward the junior high school history textbooks that became available in 1997 was profound, and the next logical step for them was to write a history textbook that they found more politically acceptable.

III. *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho* and Its Influence on the Existing Textbooks

Nishio Kanji, Fujioka Nobukatsu, and their supporters, including Kobayashi Yoshinori, a cartoon artist, wrote *New History Textbook* (*Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho*), a junior high

school history textbook, in 2000. Although the government demanded a number of changes, it eventually approved the text in 2001. The volume first became available to students in 2002. In the preface, the editors urged the readers not to apply current standards of good and evil to historical events or to evaluate such events from a twenty-first century perspective.³⁹⁾ In summary, the textbook highlighted the uniqueness and superiority of Japanese culture, the industrialization of the Meiji period (1868–1912), Western imperialism, and American and European hostilities against Japan in the 1930s and 1940s. The sole purpose of the textbook seems to be proving that Imperial Japan was a righteous and brilliant regime, as the editors themselves believe.

The strictures of political ideology exert a narrowing influence on the text from cover to cover. The editors felt no obligation to include discussions of sufferings of peasants, female factory workers, and ethnic minorities who were severely exploited during the industrialization of Meiji Japan. They felt no guilt in excluding the sufferings of colonized populations in Taiwan and Korea. Their description of the Battle of Nanjing was highly deceptive:

In August of the same year [1937], two Japanese officers were killed in Shanghai. This led to a full-scale war between Japan and China. The Japanese military expected that Chiang Kai-shek would surrender if the capital, Nanjing, fell. In December, [the Japanese military] captured Nanjing. (At this time many civilians were wounded and killed by the Japanese military. [This event] is known as the Nanjing Incident.) However, Chiang Kai-shek moved the capital to Chongqing and continued to fight.⁴⁰⁾

The term “the Nanjing Incident” is commonly used across ideological lines and has even been used by progressive historians such as Kasahara Tokushi who has published a number of articles and books that examined the atrocities in Nanjing. However, the authors of *New History Textbook* refused to explain the incident in detail and to present a picture of what really happened in Nanjing after the Japanese military captured the city.⁴¹⁾ In summary, Nishio’s textbook was little different from the wartime history textbooks that glorified Imperial Japan and its history.

The editors dreamed that this history textbook would garner more than 10% of the market share. However, facing strong challenges in Japan and abroad, no public junior high schools except schools for disabled children adopted the textbook. Out of 1.343 million history textbooks, *New History Textbook* sold only 543 copies, or 0.039% of the market.⁴²⁾ In terms of the sales, the textbook ended up a complete failure. Those who were outraged by the approval of the text succeeded in mobilizing both domestic and international public opinion to confront the use of this text in junior high schools. As the controversy grew in intensity, both domestically and internationally, few school officials at the local district level appeared willing to vote to adopt the text.

Activist organizations like Kodomo to Kyōkasho Zenkoku Netto 21 (Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21) helped to stimulate domestic and international opposition to the text — a book that the organization regarded as so dangerous that it might eventually lead the nation into war. They published not only books, but inexpensive and widely available brochures that pointed out errors and misinterpretations in *New History*

Textbook. They organized both national and international symposia to mobilize domestic and international public opinion against the textbook.⁴³⁾

Although *New History Textbook* fell far short of winning its hoped-for ten percent of the market share, the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform and its supporters were more successful in attacking the existing texts, whose progressive tone had motivated them in the first place. Through a persistent campaign of harsh criticism, the Society generated enough backlash to force the existing texts to adopt a more centrist tone in their most recent editions. Although they remain essentially critical of Japan's wartime aggression, the 2002 editions include much less material on the victims of Imperial Japan than their previous editions.

For instance, only 3 textbooks currently used in middle schools include a discussion of the so-called *ianfu*, or sex slavery. In the previous versions that became available in 1997–2001, all seven textbooks more or less discussed this episode. However, in the new 2002 edition, four textbook companies decided not to include any discussion of the women forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military. As to descriptions of Japan's colonial rule, Tokyo shoseki replaced a controversial photograph of Korean guerilla fighters, which had been ruthlessly condemned by the Society, with sōtokufu, or a picture of the building that housed the Japanese colonial government. Osaka shoseki changed a subtitle from “Annexation of Korea and Resistance of Ordinary Koreans” (Kankoku heigō to Chōsen minshū no teikō) to “Annexation of Korea and Ordinary People in Korea” (Kankoku heigō to Chōsen no hitobito). This seemingly innocuous change—the omission of the word “resistance” (*teikō*), is significant in that it obfuscates both the unpopularity of the annexation and the struggle of Koreans to preserve the political integrity of their homeland. In this new edition, Osaka shoseki also deleted the death toll of 8,000 killed during the resistance movement.⁴⁴⁾

Regarding the Nanjing Atrocities, only two 2002 textbooks continued to use numbers to express the controversial death toll, while others used such terms as “many” (*tasū*) and “massive” (*tairyō*), thus avoiding challenges from the right. Moreover, Osaka shoseki, Kyōiku shuppan, Nihon bunkyō shuppan, and Shimizu all eliminated any reference to the notorious Three-All Operation against China. Only Nihon shoseki still maintains the discussion.⁴⁵⁾

As to the Battle of Okinawa, Kyōiku shuppan drastically reduced the description in its new edition. Tokyo shoseki and Nihon bunkyo shuppan no longer mention atrocities against civilians in Okinawa by the Japanese military. In contrast, Teikoku shoin added sentences that underscored killings of Okinawans by the military, while Osaka shoseki attached a two-page column titled “Okinawa in the Twentieth Century.”⁴⁶⁾

Moreover, junior high school history textbooks published by Nihon shoseki, Osaka shoseki, and Kyōiku shuppan, which Nishio and Fujioka regarded the three most offensive of the seven, all lost market share in 2002.⁴⁷⁾ Nihon shoseki lost seven percent of the total market between 1997 and 2002, while Osaka shoseki lost five percent and Kyōiku shuppan lost 4.8%.⁴⁸⁾ At the expense of the share of these three textbooks, Tokyo shoseki and Teikoku shoin gained in share from nine to ten percent.⁴⁹⁾ Members of the Society dismiss these gains as a mere side-effect of the losses sustained by their principal targets. The Society is continuing in its efforts to diminish the market shares of all the textbooks it considers harmful.⁵⁰⁾

In addition, the determined activism of the Society has inspired similar organizations such as the Japan Council (Nihon kaigi) to pursue political goals similar to those of the Society. The Council's branch publisher Meiseisha took over the copyrights of an unpopular nationalistic high school textbook, *Saishin Nihon shi* (The Latest Edition of Japanese History), whose market share had been approximately one percent. This text was originally published in the mid-1980s as *New Edition of Japanese History* by authors who had been outraged by the 1982 textbook controversy. The original publisher Hara shobō sold its copyright to Kokusho kankōkai in 1995, which then sold the copyright to Meiseisha.⁵¹⁾

In 2001, *The Latest Edition of Japanese History*, whose content was quite similar to *New History Textbook*, was approved by the government. Just like the *New History Textbook*, *The Latest Edition* used the term "the Greater East Asian War" (*Daitō-A sensō*), the official term used by the imperial government during the Asia-Pacific War. It also alleged that the war was an act of self-defense and ignored various human rights violations inflicted by the government in modern Japanese history. Its appended chronology of Japan begins with Emperor Jinmu, a figure who exists only in myth.⁵²⁾ This fact taken by itself illustrates a greater editorial interest in fostering a heroic image of the nation, as opposed to a rigorous presentation of truth. Meiseisha has published an English volume titled *The Alleged Nanking Massacre: Japan's Rebuttal to China's Forged Claims*. This book denies the atrocities in Nanjing and accuses the Chinese government of propagating anti-Japanese sentiment in the United States.⁵³⁾ The textbook became available to students in April 2003, and the publisher sold 3,549 copies, accounting for 1.9% of the entire market.⁵⁴⁾ Just like *New History Textbook*, the sales of *The Latest Edition of Japanese History* have had no significant impact on Japanese school curricula.

The attacks from the right on the existing history textbooks in the 1990s were strident and distressing, but at the same time they produced a few noticeable encouraging outcomes. First, *New History Textbook* and its eventual approval provoked the rise of a grassroots movement among concerned individuals both in Japan and abroad. The reaction against *New History Textbook* has included not only intellectuals, but also students and housewives. Japanese grassroots group organizations such as Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21 successfully brought the issue in the international arena and effectively mobilized international public opinion through media, workshops, and public lectures. In addition, the approval of the nationalistic textbook also promoted international cooperation among historians. For example, on December 22, 2001, a workshop on history textbooks in Japan and Korea was conducted under the sponsorship of five Japanese and Korean academic organizations. A study group of history education at Tokai University (Higashi Ajia Rekishi Kyōiku Kenkyūkai) has been trying to write a history of East Asia that can be shared by peoples throughout the region.⁵⁵⁾

IV. Conclusion

During the postwar period, Japanese history textbooks have gradually abandoned a self-centered narrative that emphasized Japan's own victimhood in favor of an account that includes more discussions of those who suffered under Imperial Japan, regardless of nationality and ethnicity. To a certain degree, fierce conservative challenges to the prevailing ethos may be regarded as a symptom of the overall progressive character of

wartime Japanese history. There can be little question that the majority of historians in postwar Japan have favored an open acknowledgement of all aspects of the nation's past. It is a pity that the media, particularly in foreign countries, have frequently overlooked this fact and have reported, often sensationally, conservative challenges to history textbooks, as if conservatives and nationalists have won the history war and have dominated Japanese society.

There can be no doubt that the study of Japanese wartime atrocities has long provided fodder for vigorous and sometimes bitter disagreement. As a result of controversies that became particularly fierce and public in the late 1990s, an unprecedented number of Japanese have perhaps become aware of the destruction and devastation caused by Imperial Japan in its attempts to dominate Asia. The more inclusive description of the Nanjing Atrocities in textbooks is just one example of this deepening awareness. However, at the same time that the number of Japanese who urge that modern Japanese history must include the sufferings of victims of Japanese aggression has become greater than ever before, those who are disturbed by such a view have also increased in number. The only faction that seems to have decreased is the indifferent, neutral center. It is inconceivable to expect that either side will succeed in silencing the other. Both camps will continue to coexist for a foreseeable future, trying to expand their sphere of influence in order to defeat the other.

On the one hand, the dispute over wartime Japanese history has contributed to enriching the history of the Asia-Pacific War. On the other hand, the war over history in postwar Japan continually reminded nearby nations of their wartime sufferings and devastations. Although the Japanese government has had normalized diplomatic relations with its Asian neighbors since the 1950s, reconciliation between Japanese people and their Asian neighbors does not seem to be very bright.

A number of the members of the Japanese Society for Textbook Reform are pedagogues. They should remember what many teachers felt after Japan's defeat. They should realize that what drove Ienaga to a long battle against the authorities in the court was his guilty memory of being sending his students to the battlefield.⁵⁶⁾ They should recognize that wartime textbooks, similar in spirit to their own *New History Textbook*, helped to cause millions of deaths in Asia and the Pacific. They should seriously question any attitude that, under the glittering banner of patriotism, leads to mass murder and devastation. And those who waged wars in pre-1945 Japan all identified themselves as patriots.

Notes

- 1) See, for example, Fujioka Nobukatsu and Nishio Kanji, *Kokumin no yudan: rekishi kyōkasho ga abunai* (Negligence of the Nation: The Danger of History Textbooks), (Tokyo: PHP kenkyūjo, 1996), 241–44.
- 2) Nishio Kanji, et al. eds., *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho* (New History Textbook), (Tokyo: Fusōsha, 2001), 7.
- 3) *Ibid.*, II–III.
- 4) See, for example, Tawara Yoshifumi, *Tettei kenshō abunai kyōkasho* (Rigorous Inspection of an Alarming Textbook), (Tokyo: Gakushū no tomo sha, 2001); Komori Yōichi, et al. eds, *Rekishi kyōkasho nani ga mondai ka* (History Textbooks: Issues at Stake), (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2001); Rekishigaku kenkyūkai (Association for Historical Studies), *Rekishika ga yomu "tsukurukai" kyōkasho* (How Historians Read *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho*), (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 2001).
- 5) See, for example, Howard French, "Japan's Refusal to Revise Textbooks Angers Its Neighbors," *The New*

York Times, 10 July 2001, A3.

- 6) *Ibid.*
- 7) “Jinjō shōgaku chiri sho” (vol. 1), reprinted in Kaigo Tokiomi, *Nihon kyōkasho taikei kindai hen* (The Systematic Study of School Textbooks in Japan), (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1965), vol. 16, 488. The textbook was used by fifth-year elementary school students, beginning in 1936.
- 8) “Shōgaku kokugo tokuhon” (vol. 1), *Nihon kyōkasho taikei kindai hen* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1963), vol. 7, 559–60.
- 9) “Shōgaku kokugo tokuhon” (vol. 4), *Nihon kyōkasho taikei kindai hen* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1963), vol. 7, 633–35, 646–48.
- 10) See, for example, “Nogi Maresuke,” *Nihon kyōkasho taikei kindai hen* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1962), vol. 3, 298–99.
- 11) Kuboi Norio, *Nihon no shinryaku sensō to Ajia no kodomo* (Japanese Aggression and Children in Asia), (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 1996), 23.
- 12) “Shōgaku kokushi jinjōka yō gekan” (Elementary School National History, vol. 2), reprinted in *Nihon kyōkasho taikei kindai hen* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1962), vol. 20, 231–33.
- 13) Kubo Yoshizō, *Shōwa kyōiku shi* (The History of Education in the Shōwa Period), (Tokyo: San’ichi shobō, 1994), vol. 1, 84–85.
- 14) For example, in 1937, the Special Higher Police investigated 254 cases of rumors that they considered harmful to the society, and the court prosecuted 107 people. Wada Mutsurō, 26-year old manager of a café in Tokyo, who had told a taxi driver that it was quite natural for Chinese to become anti-Japanese since their nation had been invaded by Japan, was sentenced to three years’ probation, violation of which could have led to eight months in prison. See Hayashi Zensuke, “Shina jihenka ni okeru fuon kōdō to sono taisaku ni tsuite” (Alarming Activities and How They Were Dealt With at the Time of China Incident), reprinted in *Shakai mondai sōsho* (A Series of Social Problems), 1: 79 (Kyoto: Tōyō bunkasha, 1978), 8–12.
- 15) Tokutake Toshio, *Kyōkasho no sengo shi* (History of Postwar School Textbooks), (Tokyo: Shin Nihon shuppansha, 1995), 41–43.
- 16) *Nihon kyōkasho taikei kindai hen* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1962), vol. 20, 602–03.
- 17) “Kuni no Ayumi” (ge), *Nihon kyōkasho taikei kindai hen* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1962), vol. 20, 461.
- 18) *Ibid.*, 462–64.
- 19) Tokutake Toshio, *Kyōkasho no sengo shi* (Postwar History of School Textbooks), (Tokyo: Shin Nihon shuppansha, 1995), 92–93.
- 20) Kyōkasho kentei soshō shien zenkoku renrakukai (The National Alliance in Support of the Lawsuit against Textbook Authorization), *Ienaga kyōkasho saiban* (Ienaga Textbook Trial), (Tokyo: Sōgō tosho, 1967), iii–v; *Ienaga kyōkasho saiban jūnen shi* (The Ten-Year History of the Ienaga Textbook Case), (Tokyo: Sōdo bunka, 1977), 40. Tōyama Shigeki and Ōe Shinobu, *Ienaga Nihonshi no kentei* (The Authorization of Ienaga’s History of Japan), (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1976), 12–14, 220–37.
- 21) Tokutake, 161–68.
- 22) Tawara Yoshifumi, *Kyōkasho kōgeki no shinsō* (The Depths of Attacks on School Textbooks), 158–70.
- 23) Oda Baku, “Jūgonen sonsō o dō oshieruka” (How to Teach the Fifteen-Year War), *Rekishi chiri kyōiku* 219 (December 1973), 32–33.
- 24) Yoneda Shinji, “Kyōkasho ni okeru Chūgokuzō” (Images of China in Textbooks), *Rekishi chiri kyōiku* 216 (October 1973), 19–20. Honda’s *Travels in China* was serialized in the *Asahi* newspaper and was thus widely available to the public.
- 25) Tokutake, 191–92.
- 26) “Kyōkasho sara ni ‘senzen’ fukken e” (Textbooks Return Further “Toward Prewar” Position), *Asahi shinbun*, 26 June 1982, 1.
- 27) Quoted in Kagami Mitsuyuki and Himeta Mitsuyoshi, *Shōgen Nankin daigyakusatsu* (Testimonies on the Nanjing Massacre), (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1984), 228–29. See, also, Tawara, 158–70.
- 28) “Nankin daigyakusatsu masshō o motome kyūgunjin ra teiso” (Veterans File Lawsuit Demanding Deletion of the Nanjing Massacre), *Asahi shinbun*, 14 March 1984, 22.
- 29) For example, members of the Association for History Teachers published a number of newsletters and

- brochures to raise public awareness and to prevent high school history teachers from using the textbook in the classroom. See, Rekishi kyōikusha kyōgikai (Association for History Teachers), *Rekishi kyōiku 50 nen no ayumi to kadai* (50 Years of History Education and Its Objectives), (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1997), 247.
- 30) Rekishi chiri kyōikusha kyōgikai, 247.
 - 31) Dai Guohui, “Nihon e no jogen” (Advice to Japan), *Sekai* 443 (October 1982), 72–74.
 - 32) Rekishi kyōikusha kyōgikai, 213–15, 255–56.
 - 33) Tawara Yoshifumi, *Kyōkasho kōgeki no shinsō*, 171. The original sentence read: “yaku nijūman to mo iwareru Chūgokujin o satsugai shi ...” The textbook included a photograph of Japanese celebrating the fall of Nanjing. The caption read: “The Japanese military victory was reported widely, and the nation celebrated.” For the market shares of the various 1997 junior high school textbooks, see Shuppan rōren (The Association for Labor Unions of the Publishing Industry), *Kyōkasho repōto* 97 (Report of Textbooks in 1997), (Tokyo: Shuppan rōren, 1997), 64.
 - 34) Tawara, *Kyōkasho kōgeki no shinsō*, 170–72.
 - 35) Fujioka Nobukatsu and Nishio Kanji, *Kokumin no yudan* (Negligence of the Nation), (Tokyo: PHP kenkyūjo, 1996), 241–44.
 - 36) *Ibid.*, 2–3.
 - 37) *Ibid.*, 209–14.
 - 38) *Ibid.*, 190–97, 222–24.
 - 39) Nishio Kanji, et al., eds., *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* (New History Textbook), (Tokyo: Fusōsha, 2001), 6–7.
 - 40) *Ibid.*, 270–71.
 - 41) Kasahara Tokushi is a nationally and internationally recognized historian who has specialized in the Nanjing Massacre. His acclaimed work includes: *Nankin jiken* (The Nanjing Incident), (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1997).
 - 42) Shuppan rōren kyōkasho taisaku iinkai (The Textbook Examination Committee of the Japanese Federation of Publication Workers) *Kyōkasho repōto* 2002 (Textbook Report 2002), no. 46, (February 2002), 3, 66.
 - 43) For more detailed information of appeals, publications, open lectures, and other activities appeals organized by the Network 21 to fight against the adoption of *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*, see its official web site: http://www.ne.jp/asahi/kyokasho/net21/top_f.htm.
 - 44) Ishiyama Hisao, “Chūgaku rekishi kyōkasho wa dō kakikaerareta ka” (How Were Junior High School History Textbooks Revised?), *Kyōkasho repōto* 2002, no. 46, 16–17.
 - 46) *Ibid.*, 17.
 - 47) Fujioka Nobukatsu and Nishio Kanji, 243.
 - 48) Shuppan rōren kyōkasho taisaku iinkai (The Textbook Examination Committee of the Japanese Federation of Publication Workers), *Kyōkasho repōto* 2002 (Textbook Report 2002), no. 46, (February 2002), 80.
 - 49) *Ibid.*
 - 50) Tawara Yoshifumi, “‘Tsukurukai’ nado kyōkasho kōgekiha no aratana sakudō” (Blueprint of the Future Maneuvers by Groups such as “the Japanese Society for Textbook Reform”), *Kyōkasho repōto* 2002 (Textbook Report 2002), no. 46, (February 2002), 36–37.
 - 51) Shuppan rōren kyōkasho taisaku iinkai (The Textbook Examination Committee of the Japanese Federation of Publication Workers), *Kyōkasho repōto* 2003 (Textbook Report 2003), no. 47, (March 2003), 29, 32–36.
 - 52) *Ibid.*, 33–34.
 - 53) Takemoto Tadao and Ohara Yasuo, *The Alleged Nanking Massacre: Japan’s Rebuttal to China’s Forged Claims* (Tokyo: Meiseisha, 2000).
 - 54) *Kyōkasho repōto* 2003, 62–63.
 - 55) Kimijima Kazuhiko, “Nikkan no rekishi kyōkasho kōryū no torae kata to genjō” (Update and Interpretation of Joint Korean/Japanese Workshops on History Textbooks), *Kyōkasho repōto* 2002, 14–15.
 - 56) Kyōkasho kentei soshō shien zenkoku renrakukai (The National Alliance in Support of the Lawsuit against Textbook Authorization), *Ienaga kyōkasho saiban jūnen shi* (The Ten-Year History of Ienaga Textbook Case), (Tokyo: Sōdo bunka, 1977), 42–43.